

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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SECURITY INFORMATION

COUNTRY	USSR (Latvian SSR)	REPORT NO.	<input type="text"/> 25X1A
SUBJECT	Conditions in Bērze and Yelgava	DATE DISTR.	14 August 1953
		NO. OF PAGES	4
DATE OF INFO.	1949 - 1951	REQUIREMENT NO.	RD
PLACE ACQUIRED	<input type="text"/> 25X1A	REFERENCES	

* THE SOURCE EVALUATIONS IN THIS REPORT ARE DEFINITIVE.
THE APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.
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SOURCE:

1. The castle at Yelgava was burned out, and in disrepair. Gypsies and Soviet tramps lived in the ruins. The former castle theater was torn down and there was no building on this site. The cafe near the bridge was in operation. The bridge was of wood, in contrast to the other bridge over the Driksa which was new and of concrete. The former Hotel Tervete was in ruins but had been rebuilt and repaired completely. A big building was standing where the Hotel Kurzene used to be. Whether it was a new one or the former hotel was repaired source does not know. There was a big second-hand store, or Komisijas Veikals, on the southern side of Lielā iela, between Lielā iela and Poruka iela. Opposite this store on the other side of Lielā iela there was a shoe shop and a bakery. On the site of the theater, there was a movie theater. The school, formerly Petera Gimnazijs, was repaired. The monument of the first president of Latvia, Janis Čakste, which stood in front of this building, was removed in 1951. The Orthodox church stood as before. The courthouse was in ruins. The new post office building was not damaged; there was also a movie theater in the same building. The school was in ruins. There was a square with a big garden in the background on the site of the garden of the former Aizsargu House. Militia headquarters was in a gray building, apparently the former Kaugura House. Source did not know about the prison and Red Cross Hospital, but the City Hospital was not damaged. Near this hospital there was a polyclinic but source was not able to describe the location. Source had heard that in the City Hospital two sons of former president Čakste were employed as doctors. In Gintermuiža there was still an asylum for lunatics. St. Ann's Church was repaired, but not Trinity Church near the bridge. Source did not know about the Catholic church. The railroad station was repaired, and the two railroad bridges were rebuilt. Opposite the railroad station was a statue of Lenin, and the nearby cemetery was destroyed and gardens were established instead. There was a bus connection from the railroad station along Akademijas iela and Lielā iela; source does not know how far. Source does not know of a swimming pool or a place where rowboats were rented. The steamboat harbor was at the old place near the market, and there was a steamboat connection from Yelgava to

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Slokas (N57-39, E22-13); source does not know whether the boat went as far as Riga. Source does not know whether streets were renamed in Yelgava. He did not pay any attention to that, knowing the streets by location and not by name, and remembers only the old names, such as Liela iela, Akademijas iela, Pļķu Brieža iela, Pasta iela etc. There was a sawmill in operation downstream beyond the steamboat harbor. The brickkilns around Yelgava were in operation. Generally there were many ruins along the main streets of Yelgava.

2. In Yelgava in 1947 a butcher and his wife had two rooms and a kitchen, a barn, and 3000 square meters of land. They kept a horse, two cows, three pigs, two dogs, and three cats, and fared very well. He earned money slaughtering cattle and hogs privately and helping people in cutting and weighing meat on the market. For slaughtering, he received 200 rubles for a cow and 75 rubles for a hog. He paid taxes of 2800 rubles per year for his house. There was electricity in the house. The current was constant, without interruptions. They still lived quite well in 1951. An unskilled worker earned an average of 300 rubles per month and it was not enough to live on, so everybody worked in his free time to earn something additional.

3. Source gave the following prices of articles purchased by him in 1951:

Item	Price (in rb)	Place of Purchase
Work suit, poor material, shrinking when wet	175	Market, Yelgava, 1950
Army overcoat, undyed	220	Market, Yelgava, from a soldier
Army boots	150	" " " " "
Trousers, poor quality	75	Market, Yelgava, 1950
Army uniform, blouse, and trousers	150	Market, Yelgava, 1950, from a Soviet soldier
Shoes	98	Shop in Bērse
Shirt	50	Shop in Līvberse, 1950

4. In fall 1948 a dog caught hydrophobia. Militia with a Soviet veterinarian visited the house, the dog was shot, and the yard of the house was sprinkled with a powder. All the inhabitants of the house had to be inoculated and got 20 injections each. For this purpose the people received an order from the veterinarian and had to appear in the polyclinic every other day. The polyclinic was near the hospital, and the personnel, including doctors, were all Latvians. The injections were made in the area of the stomach. First the place of injection puffed up, but on the next day it was normal and the injections were repeated until each person got 20 injections.

5. The steamship harbor was at the old place in the Driksa River opposite the market, and river navigation was carried on with several ships, all of them painted white with a red streak. Source remembers the following ships: ZIBENS, VETRA, and ZVAIGZNE. The fare from Yelgava to Slokas was three rubles.

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Kolkhoznika like all members of the kolkhoz and lived on the farm. Besides three Germans, there were only three young men working on the kolkhoz; all other young people were either drafted or in factory schools in Riga or in the office of the kolkhoz. All other work on the kolkhoz was done by old men and women. There were four men over 60 still compelled to work, and the chairman was also about 60. One member of the kolkhoz was 72 and still compelled to

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work; he carried milk to the dairy in a horsecart, and would die if not able to do any work since no pension or other support for the aged was granted. The payment was for working days, and the working day was figured out according to norms; harrowing of six hectares was one working day, carrying manure out of stables to the field was accounted as one working day if eight cart-loads were taken the distance of one-half kilometer. Watching the farm for 24 hours during the holidays of May 1 or November 7, in order to prevent sabotage, counted as two working days. In 1949/50 the salary per day was six kg grain, 800 gr sugar, and 2½ rb in cash. In 1950-51 the salary per day was much lower: 2½ kg grain, 150 grams sugar, and 1.85 rubles in cash. Grain was of very poor quality, wet, and full of worms. Source remembers that the miller did not accept the grain for grinding, and source sold his grain to a railroad employee, concealing the poor quality, of course. He received about 65 rubles for one pud, about 16 kilograms. The railroad man complained afterwards, but source was not willing to cancel the bargain, blaming the kolkhoz for the quality. Deceit was common, and even hay was stolen to furnish food for the cows in possession of kolkhozniki. It was usually done when transporting lumber in the winter for the kolkhoz; then on the way home hay was loaded and brought home. Work in the woods was usually in places far away from Berze, such as Blidene, Josta, and Lestene, and therefore no remorse for stealing was felt. Each kolkhoznik also had a certain norm of work in the woods to perform for the kolkhoz, and for this work he was paid separately. The norm was 35 cubic meters to cut and 42 cubic meters of lumber to transport. Generally, it was possible to cut four cubic meters per day if firewood was prepared, but up to ten cubic meters if logs were cut. The payment was 2.85 rubles per cubic meter.

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to appear before the draft board in December 1950, in Dobeles (N56-38, E23-17), the rayon seat. They came to Dobeles with many Latvian boys. Since source had no documents, he was issued a certificate by the kolkhoz administration that he was a member of the kolkhoz. This certificate was in Latvian and German, and the Soviet officer registering the draftees started shouting when this document was presented to him, because he did not read Latvian or German; he threatened to punish the bearer and requested a document he would be able to read. Eventually he calmed down and source was medically examined, as were the

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April 1951. Source did not receive the yoyennaya knizhka but merely a certificate that he had been medically checked and found fit. In Dobeles draftees' hair was cut and they were sent to a unit. Source thinks that they served in Kaunas. Though older, another boy was not drafted then and was supposed to report for military service by the fall of 1951. Why this delay source does not know, but it could be due to the fact that the boy's father was arrested in winter 1950 because of anti-Communist talk.

8. The official holidays were May 1, November 7, and January 1, and on these days the kolkhozniki were free. The festival of St. John's was celebrated unofficially and it was not a holiday. During the celebration of May 1 and November 7, meetings were held in Berze (N56-41, E23-26), with all the people gathering at the school. A party official gave a speech and then all moved in procession to the local cemetery, where there were buried Soviet soldiers killed in action during the last war. In the evening each kolkhoz treated the kolkhozniki with drinks, mostly beer, and there was dancing. On the festivals of May 1 and November 7 the kolkhoz administration feared anti-Communist activities, and therefore on each farm kolkhozniki were supposed to stand guard, so for one day's guard duty two working days were awarded. The persons appointed just stayed up and drank all night; nothing had happened since source was on the kolkhoz, and he never heard of anything happening before. Alcohol was cheap: in 1948-49 half a liter of schnapps cost 50 rubles, in 1950 the price was 25 rubles, and in 1951 only 22.50 rubles.

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9. During the big scale deportations in spring 1949 were deported an entire family, of which two sons had served in the Latvian Legion and were still in a Soviet PW camp, and a man who had served in the German armed forces. In 1945 a man was arrested from the Leinerti farm. He returned in 1950 as a cripple, something being wrong with one arm. Source heard that he was arrested and sentenced for talking against the Soviet regime. He spent his term in the prison in Riga. In winter 1950-51 they arrested a man from the Diki farm, because he had spoken against the Soviet regime during the threshing campaign. He was warned by other people to be careful and to shut up, but continued criticizing, and after a couple of days was arrested. His family remained at home, and his son was drafted for military service in the fall of 1951. There were more people deported from Bērsē, but source does not remember the others. Except for the Soviet veterinary doctor, there were no Soviets in the kolkhoz in Bērsē.

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COUNTRY	USSR (Latvian SSR)	REPORT NO.	<input type="text"/> 25X1A
SUBJECT	Conditions in Riga	DATE DISTR.	10 August 1953
		NO. OF PAGES	2
DATE OF INFO.	1948 - 1951	REQUIREMENT NO.	RD
PLACE ACQUIRED	<input type="text"/> 25X1A	REFERENCES	

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SOURCE:

- Source was put into a labor camp in East Prussia when she was 19 and did not possess any documents; the camp was moved gradually eastward to Yelgava and then to Riga. Never were any documents issued to the inmates. In Riga the Germans were brought to work in the town and during this time were able to leave the place of work and visit houses and shops, begging to improve their food; this was illegal and possible only due to lack of permanent control; the Germans from the camp still did not possess any documents. Source made the acquaintance of a German PW in 1948 and had a child by this man. She was admitted to a hospital at Miera iela 45 by order of the doctor of the camp, and was accepted there upon the order of the doctor without any documents. Source does not know the procedure of her registration in the hospital since she did not present any papers. After she was released from the hospital, she received a certificate issued by the hospital administration.

- The camp in Riga was located somewhere near the railroad line Riga-Tukums (N56-59, E23-10); whether or not it was the same camp as that near Imanta station was impossible to clarify, since source does not remember the names of any streets or stations. According to source there were several camps. The camp source was in was dissolved

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but whether or not the other camps remained she does not know. During the stay in the camp source had to work together with other women in different places in Riga, mainly building roads, and splitting stones. They marched to the place of work from the camp on foot and had guards with them, but were not strictly guarded while on the place of work, so many of them went around in the town begging and visited shops and private houses. Source gave birth to a child in 1949, but was not released from work even then. Some inmates of the camp looked after the baby while source was absent. She received no support as to the diapers or additional food, and even a bottle for nursing was not available. She warmed food on a stove in the barracks room. No money was paid for the work done and only due to support from the civilians in Riga did the inmates of the camp get additional food and sometimes clothing. The baby survived nevertheless

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3. While working in Sarkandaugava suburb in 1948, source met a Latvian woman who helped source with food. The woman had a child and worked in a factory, earning 300 rubles per month; her husband had been in the German army during the war and he often wrote her from someplace. In 1949 the woman disappeared and source was told by neighbors that she had been deported together with her child. Later, source met another helpful woman who earned about 500 rubles per month working in some office and taking some work to do at home. The family occupied a one-room apartment with kitchen and paid 50 rubles per month for it. Though very willing to help source, they always expressed fear that their neighbors would denounce them for accepting a German in their apartment.

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5. Until the end of 1949 there was a marketplace for second-hand goods on the Zvirgzdu Island, reached by crossing a bridge; this market was closed by the militia late in 1949 and source never heard of another place serving the same purpose. Source visited this market, called utensia or lice-market, in 1949 but never bought anything. Source also visited the Central Market, where food was sold by State shops and kolkhozniki; the prices in 1951 were as follows:

1 kg butter	50 - 60 rb	Apples, 1 kg	10 - 15 rb
1 kg cheese	35 - 45 rb	Eggs, 10	15 - 20 rb
1 kg sausage	60 - 85 rb	Dressed chickens	30 - 40 rb
1 kg cream	25 - 30 rb	Dressed goose	140 - 150 rb
1 kg bacon	45 - 60 rb	Dressed duck	90 - 100 rb
1 kg fresh pork	35 - 45 rb	Rye bread, a loaf	5 rb
1 kg beef	20 - 25 rb	Wheat bread, a loaf	2 - 3 rb
1 kg sugar	15 rb	Gray bread, <u>saldskaba</u>	6 rb
		<u>maize</u>	

One can also buy food in shops, the prices being approximately the same; there was a food shop open 24 hours, called dezhurnyy magazin. Source does not know the location. In the Armijas Ekonomiskais Veikals there was a food department on the main floor, and other departments upstairs; the escalators were in operation, also elevators. For other items in the shops, source remembers the following prices:

Stockings, 1 pair	25 - 30 rb	6 passport photos	20 rb
Ladies' underwear, complete	50 - 80 rb	Watch	600 - 1000 rb
Ladies' overcoat	600 - 700 rb	Men's underwear	100 - 120 rb
Dress	300 - 400 rb	Boots	800 rb
Women's shoes	300 - 600 rb	"Mokka" cigarettes, package of 10	1 rb
Baby's sweater	100 rb	"Riga" and "Sports" (papirosi) - source does not remember the price.	

A railroad ticket Riga - Kaliningrad cost 70 rubles.

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